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The addition of apocalyptic theology in the dialogue section of the Book of Job

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This study examines the presence of apocalyptic theology in the dialogue section of the Book of Job, with a particular focus on Job 19:25–27. The key terms 'redeemer' (גֹּאֵל, *go'el*) and 'witness' (עֵד, *'ed*) have been the subject of extensive scholarly debate, particularly regarding their implications for Job's hope. This article analyses the Hebrew text and its literary context to determine whether these terms convey an expectation of divine vindication, resurrection or ultimate justice. Rather than centring on interpretations alone, the study investigates the linguistic and theological dimensions of these words to clarify their role in Job's discourse. Through a comparative analysis of biblical and ancient Near Eastern sources, this research explores the extent to which apocalyptic motifs emerge within Job's speech.

Contribution: This study contributes to the broader discussion of Job's theological outlook by demonstrating how elements of apocalyptic thought are embedded in his expressions of hope. It also reassesses the function of Job's *go'el* and *'ed* within the framework of divine justice, moving beyond traditional legal and social interpretations. By situating Job's language within the development of biblical eschatology, this research provides a fresh perspective on the portrayal of suffering, vindication and ultimate restoration in the Old Testament.

Keywords: Job; apocalyptic theology; redeemer; witness; theodicy.

Introduction

The Book of Job contains two genres, a prose frame and a dialogue poem, which tell the story of an 'unjustly' suffering pious man named Job. Ebach notes that hardly any other book of the Old Testament is as closely linked to a problem as the Book of Job; few other books have been, and continue to be, as focused on theological and extra-theological reception (Ebach 1986). De Pury is of the opinion that the central theme of the Book of Job is not so much the question of suffering, but rather the question of love: has God rediscovered the love of his lost creature? Has he succeeded in connecting with a human being and allowing himself to be loved by Job? (De Pury 1962:8). He suggests that this reveals another side of the story and its ultimate mystery: the battle between God and Satan for possession of the human heart (De Pury 1962:8). Therefore, for De Pury, the Book of Job addresses the theological question of God's love for humanity.

If the Book of Job is read in depth, it reveals not only questions about God and his love but also significant anthropological inquiries (Steinmann 1996; Stoll 1994). The main character is Job, not God (Fleming 1994). Job endures profound physical and mental suffering; he loses his possessions and children and falls seriously ill. Although his friends come to comfort him, they instead lecture him, leaving Job completely devastated and wishing for death. In expressing his anguish, Job raises a question that everyone encounters at some point: 'Why does God let me suffer? why me of all people?' (Oeming 1995). Can there even be a kind and merciful God when there is so much injustice in the world? This question is discussed in various answers in the Book of Job. The discussion splits into two directions, that is the philosophical ('theodicy') and psychological ('suffering', 'death' and 'life after death') discussions (Lamb 2011; Waters 1997; Widjaja & Hutagaol 2020). In this discussion about human suffering (Allen 2022; Belcher 2017; Dell 1997; Garrett 2024; Fyall 1995), the question of theodicy develops (Atkinson 2022; Basinger & Basinger 1998; Bias 2024; Billings 2000; Koch et al. 2004; Köhlmoos 2002; Kurniawan & Prihantoro 2023; Müller 1992; Nicholson 1995; Strauss 2004; Webb 2023).

The question of death and the afterlife also develops. Because of his experiences of suffering, Job asks, 'Why did I not die from my mother's womb, and why did I not pass away when I came forth from the womb?' (3:11). With this question, Job inquires about his death. He does not begin his lament with a description of his present state but starts with the first biographical moment – the

hour of his birth – because he sees it as the beginning of his suffering, after which he wishes for his death. The discussion of birth and death can be found in the monologue in Chapter 3. Birth and death, life and suffering, light and darkness, earth and the underworld represent the extremes in which Job's lament is expressed in this chapter.

Overall, everything Job says can be seen as a lament before God, which is also an accusation against God. Thus, Job's rejection of life falls under the broad category of 'lament', as he accuses God by cursing his entire life, which was given to him by God and by cursing the day of his birth. In his life of unjust suffering, Job experiences '… God as an enemy who fights him almost with military means, shoots him with poisoned arrows, and sends terror against him' (Ebach 2009). That is why he wishes for his death. That is why Job sees death as the solution to his problem.

According to the Old Testament view, the dead person is first gathered to his fathers in the family tomb, then, after complete decomposition, to a shadow (Is 14:9ff.; 29:4) in the underworld, where he continues to dwell without the ability to move freely or to speak humanly and is forever distant from God (Ps 88:6, 12ff.) (Koch et al. 2004; Kurniawan & Prihantoro 2023; Strauss 2004). Therefore, the dead person is separated forever both from living people and from God (Ps 88:6ff.; cf. 6:6; 30:10). Its place is even called 'the land of oblivion' (Ps 88:6), 'the land of no return'.[1] The underworld is therefore not God's domain. Israel therefore initially knew no hope of the afterlife in the older period.

Later, new thinking emerges regarding whether the power of the God of Israel extends beyond the borders of the realm of the dead. Isaiah 26:14 provides a negative answer to the question of whether the dead can live again. However, for Isaiah, this only applies to the enemies of Israel, not to Israel itself, where the dead shall be revived (Is 26:19) (Atkinson 2022; Botterweck et al. 1984; Webb 2023). Similar descriptions are found in Isaiah 25 and Ezekiel 37, but these passages are not statements about the resurrection of the dead; rather, they are metaphors for the revival of Israel.

The open question is whether the final form of the Book of Job reflects a hope in the afterlife: 'If a man dies, will he live again?' (14:14). To address this question, Job expresses a desire, despite the fact that man remains in Sheol: 'Oh, that you would hide me in Sheol, that you would conceal me until your anger has turned, that you would set a goal for me and then remember me!' (14:13). Does this reflect hope in God's faithfulness to those in Sheol? Is this why apocalyptic thinking is present here? The purpose of this article is to examine the Hebrew text and its literary context to assess whether the terms in question suggest an anticipation of divine justice, resurrection or ultimate vindication. Instead of focusing solely on interpretations, the study delves into the linguistic and theological aspects of these terms to better understand their significance in Job's dialogue. By comparing biblical and ancient Near Eastern texts, this research investigates the extent to which apocalyptic themes appear in Job's words.

1.According to Akkadian *ercet lä täri*. Cf. Job 10,21: '*before I go ('elek), and do not return (wᵉlo´ ´äšûb)*'.

Literary problems of the Book of Jobs

Regarding the origin of the Book of Job, there is an almost undisputed consensus in contemporary Job research that the book was written in several stages. A number of literary issues are used as arguments to support this view.

Firstly, the literary issue in the Book of Job involves two distinct genres: the prose frame (1:1–2:13; 42:7–17) and the poetry in dialogue and drama (3:1–42:6). There are two main explanations for this issue: (1) The original Job narrative and the original Job poem were created separately and were not initially connected and (2) the poem and the frame narrative were originally transmitted separately. This is evidenced by the fact that Chapter 3 and subsequent chapters are inconceivable without an introductory remark about Job's illness. The introduction of the friends is also necessary, and this is only found in 2:11–13. Therefore, it must be assumed that the poem was never transmitted without the frame narrative. While the frame narrative can stand alone, the poetry cannot exist independently of the frame narrative. Thus, the frame narrative is older than the poetry.

Secondly, the literary issue concerns the existence of Chapter 28. Like Elihu's speeches, the song about wisdom is a later addition. There is no reason to deny that this 28th chapter was part of the original conception of the Book of Job; in fact, its distinctiveness and departure from the style of the discourses give it the role of a fermata – both a point of rest and a conclusion to the discourses between Job and his friends.

Thirdly, the literary issue within the Job poem is whether Elihu's speeches are secondary to the poem. Two arguments support this view: (1) Elihu, unlike Job's other three friends, is not mentioned in the frame narrative; (2) the Elihu speeches interrupt the connection between Job's call (31:35) and God's response (38:1).

Fourthly, the literary issue concerns God's speech about Behemoth and Leviathan (40–41). Five arguments are presented for this issue: (1) The descriptions of these animals are longer than those of the previously mentioned animals, creating the impression of interpolation; (2) the challenging questioning found in Chapter 39 gives way to detailed descriptions; (3) instead of focusing on the activity of the animals, as in Chapter 39, their physical characteristics are described; (4) the animals are typical of Egypt, while those described earlier are more characteristic of Palestine; and (5) these passages are not connected with the actual speech of Yahweh, which refers to the first speech in Chapters 38 and subsequent chapters.

Based on the aforementioned literary problems, it can be concluded that the Book of Job underwent several stages of

development. The question now is whether there was an apocalyptic editing stage in the final phase of the book's composition. This article argues that apocalyptic editing occurred during the later stages of Job's redaction. Here, some insertions in the section of Job's dialogue with his three friends will be discussed.

Some apocalyptic insertions in the dialogue section

Job 13:14–16:

[14]I will bear my flesh with my teeth and place my soul in my hand.

[15]Behold, he may kill me! I will (nevertheless) hope in him, (therefore) I will justify my ways in his sight!

[16]That alone must be enough to save me, for no wicked man can stand before his face.

Verse 14 is introduced with the particles עַל־מָה. In my translation, these particles are missing. On this problem, Fohrer said that the faulty verse division has separated עַל־מָה from v. 13 (Bias 2024; Duhm 2011; Fohrer 1963; Hölscher 1937). The difficult problem is the meaning of the verse. On this image, like a predator, Gradl said that the image may be taken from the predator carrying off its prey with its teeth. In this state, the prey is endangered; it can easily be snatched away by other predators (Gradl 2001:145; Hartley 1991:222).[2] De Wilde (1981) also writes about this image:

> He [*Job*] engages in a battle with God, like an animal fighting for its prey. Here, the prey is the flesh, i.e. Job's life; he exposes it to the attacks of his adversary. (p. 169)

This image thus depicts Job's difficult situation, where his life is endangered by his suffering. This situation is more clearly expressed in v. 14b: 'put my soul in my hand'. Hartley (1991:222) correctly explains the meaning of this phrase: 'This expression means that a person with fierce determination puts his life in peril as he resists the forces arrayed against him'. The meaning of v. 14b is the same as that of v. 14a, showing that Job's life is endangered by his intense suffering. Therefore, v. 14b serves as a synonymous parallel to v. 14a. It exemplifies the cry of Job's suffering (Hartley 1991:222).[3] Mende (1993) sees the eschatological tradition here. She writes:

> He, Job, will carry his life, maltreated in the judgement of this world, like a spoil before God (v. 14a) and hand it over to him, the judge, without reservation (v. 14b). He may also kill him, i.e. let him finally perish in the judgement of this world … (p. 27)

Job hopes for a turning point in time, a moment when the world will perish, and in this pivotal instance, God stands as a righteous judge.

2.Hartley also gives the depiction of the animal, 'The picture may be that of an animal carrying its prey between its teeth. Suddenly another animal cuts across its path and challenges it for its prey. The animal carrying the prey must defend its own life at the risk of losing its food'.

3.Hartley says that 'Job accepts the danger of instant death in challenging God to hear his complaint'.

Job's hope (vv. 15–16)

Job continues his lament in v. 15 (Kummerow 2005)[4]: '*Behold, he [God] may kill me*' (Gordis 1978).[5] LXX has translated: 'eva,n me ceirw,shtai o` duna,sthj evpei. kai. h=rktai' (*Though the Mighty One should lay hand on me, and he will reign [in me]*). The LXX reflects the theology of God's majesty. If the LXX is correct, a better translation of v. 15 would be: 'Though he (God) will slay me, I will hope in him'. Against the majesty of God, one cannot do otherwise (the theology of God's majesty), because man is so lowly in comparison to God (the theology of lowliness). However, one can still present his righteousness before God, because God has righteousness and is a righteous judge (the theology of righteousness). Because Job can justify his righteousness before God, this is the reason for his hope in God (Driver & Gray 1964:123).[6] Here, we witness Job's determination to present his case before God. His friends have disappointed him, and he no longer expects anything from them; God is his only refuge.

Because God is a righteous judge, this provides a strong reason to hope in God; through God, Job finds his salvation לִישׁוּעָה (Stoll 1994:788)[7] (v. 16). The important thing in this verse is that here the pious compare themselves to the wicked: '*This alone must be enough to save me, for no wicked man can stand before his face*'. Here we see the dualistic tradition.[8] This motif of contrast is also found in Wis. 1–5.[9] The wise righteous are contrasted here with the foolish wicked: '*All [the wise righteous] who trust in him [God] will know the truth* (sunh, sousin avlh, qeian)*, and the faithful will abide with him in love. For mercy and compassion will be bestowed on his chosen ones. But the wicked [the foolish wicked] will be punished for their schemes, they who have disregarded the [wise] righteous and have fallen away from the Lord.*' (Wisdom 3, 9–10 according to EÜ). Furthermore, this contrast is also found in Dan. 12:2–3, that people will be resurrected and divided at the end of time; the *maskilim* (implicitly) will receive eternal life, whereas the wicked (implicitly) will receive eternal shame and eternal abhorrence: '*And many of those who sleep in the land of dust will awake, these to eternal life, and those to shame, to eternal abhorrence. And the wise will shine like the brightness of the firmament, and those who have led the many to righteousness like the stars forever and ever.*' Even '*the*

4.On the ambiguity of the translation of v. 15, Kummerow explains that the significance of ~g in Job 16:19 and Job's Changing Conceptions of Death.

5.Gordis offers other possible interpretations of the relationship between verses 14 and 15. He takes verse 14 as an example of an indirect quotation: 'You ask, why do I endanger my life (by speaking)? and I answer, though he slay me, I must justify my ways to his face'.

6.Driver and Gray say that 'the fact that Job can and does maintain his integrity before God (15b): this is his ground of hope that he will ultimately have salvation …'.

7.Seventy-eight times in the Old Testament: Four times in the Torah (Gn 49:18; Ex 14:13; 15:2; Deut 32:15); four times in the prophets at the front (1 Sa 2:1; 14:45; 2 Sa 10:11; 22:51); 21 times in the prophets at the back (Is 12:2.3; 25,9; 26,1.18; 33,2.6; 49,6.8; 51,6.8; 52,7.10; 56,1; 59,11.17; 60;18; 62,1; Jn 2,10; Hab 3,8) and 49 times in the Scriptures (Hi 13,16; 30,15; Ps 3,3.9; 9,15; 13,6; 14,7; 18,51; 20,6; 21,2.6; 22,2; 28,8; 35,3.9; 42,6.12; 43,5; 44,5; 53,7; 62,2.3.7; 67:3; 68:20; 69:30; 70:5; 74:12; 78:22; 80:3; 88:2; 89:27; 91:16; 96:2; 98:2, 3; 106:4; 116:13; 118:14, 15, 21; 119:123, 155, 166, 174; 140:8; 149:4; 1 Chr 16:23; 2 Chr 20:17). This word seems most often to denote God's help that has already happened and been experienced.

8.Dualistic thinking: two forces or principles that are independent of each other, of the same origin, standing side by side or working against each other.

9.The Wisdom of Solomon was probably written around 150 BC in Alexandria by an unknown author.

wise and righteous will shine like the brightness of the firmament' (Dan. 12:3), just as in Wisdom 3:7: '*At the final judgment they will shine like sparks shooting through a field of stubble*'. This motif is a dualistic motif (Bricker 1995:501–507; Kaiser 1995:32)[10] which can also be found in the Iranian tradition. The author of the apocalyptic Book of Daniel believed that he and his group, whom he describes as *maskilim*, would receive eternal life at the end of time, whereas those outside the group would face eternal punishment. Therefore, the motif of contrast is a product of later wisdom-apocalyptic theology. However, when using the term 'dualistic' here, it is important to be cautious, because Jewish apocalypticism is actually monistic, asserting that God is the creator of all creation. Thus, the dualistic thinking in the Book of Daniel (or in other apocalyptic texts, such as Wisdom 1–5 and Job 13:14–16) reflects a dualism that emphasises God's sovereignty over his creation. The dualistic thinking strongly present in Daniel 12:2–3, Wisdom 1–5 and Job 13:16 is ethical dualism, distinguishing between good and evil. At the end of the world, before the judgement of God, the resurrected are sharply divided into two groups: the good, who receive reward, and the evil, who face punishment.

Job's hope in God as the righteous judge is therefore an eschatological apocalyptic hope (Mende 1993:27).[11] The dating of the addition of Job 13:14–16 is likely the same as the dating of Daniel 12:2–3, that is, during the difficult situation under Antiochus IV. This was a very challenging time for the pious, marked by religious persecution and the threat of death. Job 13:14–16 is an addition in Job's response (12:1–14:22) to Zophar's first speech. In his speech, Zophar condemns Job as a babbler and a mocker. He argues that if Job continues to babble, God will stand against him as a righteous judge. Zophar also presents the salvific fate of the pious and the negative counter-image of the wicked. He advises Job to abandon evil and stick to God. With fierce criticism, sharp irony and a sarcastic tone, Job challenges the idea that his suffering comes from God, despite the fact that he has not sinned. He expresses a desire to leave behind the vain existence of mankind.

In contrast to Job, the editor focused on the majesty of God and presents a theology centred on God's power and wisdom. Through his wisdom and power, everything that happens, including Job's suffering, is under God's control. That is why Job is not allowed to question God's justice. God is justice. To mediate this dispute, the editor of justice expresses a theology of justice. On the one hand, Job is right; he is a suffering, righteous man. When we observe the reality of the world, we see injustice (12:4–6): The pious suffer (12:4–5), while the wicked live in peace (12:6). But hope lies in the righteousness of God. The righteousness of God remains with the life of the pious. The theology of justice is further intensified by the eschatological-apocalyptic editor. At the end of time, the world will end through God's justice. However, at this time, God stands as a righteous judge. Eternal life through God's salvation is for the pious, and eternal punishment is for the wicked.

Job 14:13–17:

[13]That you would hide me in Sheol, hide me until your wrath turned away, set a goal for me and then remember me!

[14]If a man dies, he will live again! All the days of my service I would then hope until my replacement would come!

[15]You would call me and I would answer you, you would long for the work of your hands.

[16]For then you would count my steps, but you would not pay attention to my sin!

[17]My guilt would be sealed in a bundle, and you would cover my guilt.

This section has two major parts: (1) Job's lament (v. 13) and (2) Job's hope (vv. 14–17).

1 Job's lament (v. 13)

God's wrath and hopelessness are the themes of Job's response (in the original poem) in Chapters 12–14 (Baloian 1992; Lohfink 2000:137–155; Perlitt 1972:290–303).*[12] In the post-exilic version of Job's poem, God's wrath is presented as the cause of Job's suffering. Dying is therefore a better way for Job to leave his suffering because of the wrath of God. This is also the advice of his wife that dying is good advice for the sufferer. Sheol is the final place of man when he dies. For Jewish thinking, Sheol is a land of oblivion and one can no longer return to the world of the living. Even God's work in Sheol is no longer effective (Ps 88:6, 11) (Gradl 2001:152; Tanasyah et al. 2025:14–22). In 14:13, however, has a radical position. Job wishes:

> [*T*]hat God could hide and conceal him until his anger has turned again to love and kindness. If God must afflict and strike him while he sees him, may he remove him from his sight and hide him from his wrath in the underworld! (Fohrer 1963:257)

This is why Job here believes that God is not always in wrath (Is 54:8) (Hartley 1991:236; Kidner 1985:257), and

10.Similarly in Proverbs 13:9: '*The light of the righteous shines, but the lamp of the wicked goes out*'. Kaiser comments that 'From the houses of the righteous, the light of the lamp shines at night, while the houses of the wicked lie dark and extinct'.

11.Mende says 'Loyalty to Yahweh costs us our lives; it is Yahweh himself who delivers us up to death. Within the framework of the eschatological hope already given, which transcends death, this experience must inevitably lead to the paradox, as Dan 3:14–18 testifies a little later in the time of Antiochus IV: He may kill us, but we still wait for him; death does not have the last word, but salvation, which proceeds from his face beyond death'.

12.God's wrath is also a central theme of the theology of the DtrH. On this, Lohfink explains that 'The Deuteronomistic historical work is perhaps also a retrospection in anger … But it is certainly a retrospective from anger. Its last creators must have been people whose own existence was caught up in the dark cloud of God's wrath. In the midst of this wrath that surrounded them, they looked back. Why did YHWH do this to this land? Why did this tremendous wrath break out? – this was the only question that ultimately preoccupied them (Deut 29:23). Only when this question was answered did other questions arise, such as the law or the covenant. Even at the beginning of the story, its authors were concerned about the end. The end was anger, not love. Or not quite? Was there perhaps still love in the raging anger? … The Deuteronomists knew themselves to be under the wrath of God. They wrestled with the wrath of their God. They discovered that no matter how harsh God is, in the end he cannot completely let go of his love for Israel'. The theology of God's wrath in the final form of the Book of Job is probably a continuation of DtrG's theology of God's wrath. According to the apocalyptic editor, the wrath of God is a judgement of God in the end times that causes the destruction of the world. But in the end, God has love for the pious, and his love leads to the salvation of the pious, whereas his justice leads to the destruction of the wicked.

why Sheol is 'a temporary hiding-place'.[13] Habel (1985) also writes about this, 'Job dreams of a provocative alternative [for Sheol] - temporary asylum in the land of the dead until God's fury is abated and a fair trial is possible'. And he also believes that Sheol is nothing more than a land of oblivion, a land of no return and a land of nothingness, that 'he hopes against hope that there will be more after this life, that God will redeem him from Sheol after his anger has subsided …' (Simundson 1986:67), that he hopes in life after death or the resurrection of the dead (cf. the analogy of Noah's ark).

The hope of Job (vv. 14–17)

In 14:14, this hope is intensified with the phrase: '*If a man dies, he will surely live again! All the days of my ministry I will hope until my replacement comes!*' Verse 14:14 has the same motif as 13:15, especially in the use of the word אָחִיל (Andersen 2008:172; Gibson 1899:53). Although God wants to kill him (13:15a) or although God's wrath is against him (14:13), Job still hopes in God. He hopes for salvation (13:16) or redemption (Fohrer 1963:258)[14] (14:14). Because Sheol is not a land of oblivion and nothingness, but a temporary hiding place (cf. also the analogy of Noah's ark), Job therefore believes that '*if a man dies, he will live again!*', and he also believes that the resurrection will be a redemption from his suffering.

Also in the same motif with 13:15, Job hopes in 14:15f. In a judgement theophany for his vindication: '*You would call me, and I would answer you*', and in this judgement, theophany contains an eschatological hope. This is reminiscent of the paradise narrative in Gen 3; that is a contrast between the two (Allen 2022; Atkinson 2022; Bias 2024; Webb 2023):

- If the coming of God in Genesis 3:8ff. caused man to panic so that he fled the call of God *(qr')* into communion with him, Job in 14:15a will fearlessly withstand this call *(qr')* and respond to God in boldness.
- If God had to banish man from his salvific closeness because of sin and cast him out into the remoteness of a judgement that encompasses the whole world (Gn 3:23f.), then in Job 14:15b he longs intimately for the work of his hands.
- Whereas in the beginning man was scrupulous about concealing his conduct from God by fleeing the encounter with him and finally shifting the responsibility for his sin (Gn 3:9–13), Job's conduct can lie open before God's scrutinising gaze (14:16a) without God having to search for sin in him (14:16b).

13.Andersen writes, 'Job is not thinking of Sheol as his final resting place, but as a hideout safe from the blasts of the divine anger (cf. Ps 139:8; Am 9:2–3)'. A very good analogy is offered by Fohrer, who compares the function of Sheol here with the function of Noah's ark in the flood narrative. Mende also rightly explains, 'It [Noah's Ark] is the place of refuge granted by God himself from the destructive power of his judgment, where the righteous Noah is safe until God turns his wrath (Gen 6:13f. 17f.; 7:1.7.23; cf. Job 14:131). He then remembers Noah and calls him out of the ark (Gen 8:1, 15f.; cf. Job 14:15a) in order to establish a new, wholesome community of life with him (Gen 9:1–17; cf. Job 14:15b). In it, God will continue to watch over people's ways, but will no longer seek out their missteps in order to destroy them (Gn 8:21f.; 9:11–15; cf. Job 14:16)'. This is why Hi 14:13ff. is about a hope in the resurrection of the dead.

14.According Fohrer, the word 'redemption' means 'the liberation from the sorrowful and miserable fate whose hardship Job laments'. But I see the apocalyptic hope in this passage.

Mende (1993) discusses this distinction, stating: 'Genesis 3 represents a prehistoric, or prototypical, view of the beginning …' while in Job 14:15f, it presents:

> [*A*] final historical depiction, which, though not a historical representation of an actual event, illustrates the essence of future creation – liberated from sin's power (14:16b) and its consequences, such as judgement (14:13a), and restored to its original connection with Yahweh (14:15) – in other words, completed. (p. 12)

Thus, this reflects an anticipation of the ultimate creation.

Job 14:13–17 and its context

Job 14:13–17, like Job 13:14–16, is an addition to Job's reply (12:1–14:22) to Zophar's first speech. In his speech, Zophar condemns Job as a babbler and mocker. If Job continues to be a babbler, God will stand against him as a righteous judge. Zophar also presents the salvific fate of the pious and contrasts it with the negative fate of the wicked, because God has great wrath against the wicked. He therefore advises Job to abandon evil and stick to God in order to prevent God's wrath.

However, Job consistently presents himself as righteous. With the theology of lowliness, Job argues that one cannot escape the wrath of God. But for the pious, Sheol is only a temporary hiding place. Once God's wrath subsides, the righteous will stand before God's judgement, and God will not take note of Job's sin.

Job 16:18–22:

[18]Earth, cover not my blood, and let there be no resting place for my cry for help!

[19]Even now, behold, in heaven is my witness and my advocate on high.

[20]My friends mock me, but my eyes look up to God with tears.

[21]That he may bring justice to a man against God and to a man against his friends.

[22]Because there are only a few years to go before I take a path from which I can no longer return.

This section has two major parts: (1) Job's lament (vv. 18–22) and (2) Job's hope (vv. 19–21).

Job's lament (vv. 18.22)

With a fierce cry, Job asks in 16:18a that the earth may not cover his blood. This is an old idea from the field of blood revenge:

> [*A*]ccording to which innocently shed blood that lies uncovered at the scene of the crime cries out for revenge and challenges God to intervene if a person does not act as an avenger and cover the blood. (Mende 1993:15)

This idea is reminiscent of the story of Cain and Abel in Gen. 4:8–15 (Hartley 1991:263).[15] The meaning and motif of this idea in 16:18a is about Job's life, which only has a short time left[16] (cf. 16:22: '*For there are only a few years left, for I am going a way from which I cannot return*') (Fohrer 1963:290; Van der Horst 1991:255). Through this idea, Job reaches out to God for help (Hartley 1991:263).[17]

Job's hope (vv. 19–21)

In the story of Cain and Abel, God listens to the cry of Abel's blood. However, the problem is this:

> In the preceding verses, Job had been speaking as though he were being murdered, with God Himself as the murderer … But if God is the killer, to whom will the cry be addressed? Who will hear and intercede with God? Who is the witness in heaven (v. 19)? (Simundson 1986:79)

To answer this dilemma, the author employs the theology of majesty and the theology of lowliness (וַעֲנָוָה). According to the theology of majesty, God possesses all majesty and power (Simundson 1986:79).[18] But when comparing oneself to God, human existence is shown to be very low, for man is but dust and ashes (42:6). Therefore, standing before the God of majesty with our suffering, we cannot claim that God is unjust, for man is so lowly, and God is so majestic. In the last days, we will witness the destruction of humanity, but God will show love for his righteous ones. As the righteous God, he will stand in the final judgement as the righteous judge. In this judgement, God will be the righteous judge for Job. In his present judgement, the witnesses on earth have proven to be false witnesses for Job, including his friends, and the fact that his friends are his mockers (Irwin 1962:217).[19] Verse (16:20) hurts much more than if anyone mocks him (cf. Ps 41:10; 55:13–55) (Terrien 1957:56).[20] This compels Job to place his hope in the witness in heaven (Hartley 1991:264),[21] for 'the witness in the clouds is faithful' (Ps 89:38) (Mende 1993:15).[22] In hoping in God as a witness, Job also confesses God as his saviour (Irwin 1962:217–224; Mowinckel 1957:207–212). We are amazed that Job, despite his shock that God has become his friend, still calls on him as a witness and arbiter (Gladson 1985:59)[23] or rescuer. This shows that the saint's faith in God cannot waver. We have already seen the theology of humility in Chapter 9. Job's mind tells him that he cannot expect acquittal from God and, therefore, no help, but Job's heart tells him that God cannot allow him to fall for good. Job knows – although he does not know how יָדַע לֹא – that God is the only one who can stand by him (Andersen 2008:183).[24] He will come to understand that God has truly been with him all along and that God will indeed judge by vindicating and rebuking Job before his friends (42:7–8). Verses 16:18–22 testify that, amid the hopelessness of his distress, the poet of Job finally found refuge in the hope that God will lead the individual to salvation even beyond death. On the one hand, he may have been guided by the certainty of faith that God, who had already shown his power to overcome death in bringing his people out of the tomb of exile (Ez. 37), would not leave him, the individual, behind in death. On the other hand, he may have been aware of the eschatological promise in Joel 4:20f.: 'But Judah will endure forever, and Jerusalem from generation to generation. And I will avenge their blood … Yahweh will dwell in Zion'.

Job 16:18–22 is an addition in Job's response (16:1–17:16) to Eliphaz's second speech (Chapter 15). In his speech, Eliphaz condemns Job as hypocritical and arrogant. If Job continues to remain hypocritical, Eliphaz warns him that he no longer has a word of promise for him but rather offers lectures and threats about the fate of the wicked.

In his response, Job criticises both his friends and God. Job calls his friends 'troublesome comforters' with sharp words. This is why Job refers to his friends as mockers in 16:20, and by extension, false witnesses. Job also calls God 'his avenging enemy', the one who carries out the angry attacks against him. This is why Job speaks of his imminent death (16:18a,22) with hopelessness (16:22). Though there is hopelessness here, Job expresses his hope in God as his witness. Even when facing death or after he has died, he still appeals to God, and in that, there is hope for redemption because God is his redeemer.

Job 19:23–27:

O that my words were written down! That they would be recorded in a monument (ELB; EÜ),[25]

15.Hartley explains that 'The ancient peoples thought that the spilled blood of a slain victim was crying out for revenge'. Simundson also writes about this: 'As in Gen. 4:10, the blood of one who has been murdered cries out to God asking for vengeance'. Cf. also Genesis 37:26; 1 Samuel 26:20; Isaiah 26:21; Ezekiel 24:7ff.

16.Hartley says, 'His end is approaching so fast that he can count the few years left'.

17.Hartley says, 'Moreover, it was believed that if the next of kin did not answer the cry, God in heaven would vindicate the one slain. Still living but fearful of expiring soon, Job, like one whose life is threatened, cries out, "Murder!" He wants God to avenge him before it is too late. He enjoins his cry not to find any resting place until it is answered. The only answer that will satisfy his cry is an acquittal issued by the divine tribunal'.

18.Simundson explains that 'Earlier (9:33) Job had complained that there is no umpire to decide disputes between God and humans. When God is acting unjustly, there is no one to call God to account. We humans are not able to contend against those odds. God, it seems, has all the power'.

19.Irwin translates it quite differently: 'my mediator is my friend'. But the context is quite different in that Job no longer has any trust in his friends here. Therefore, God is his only hope.

20.Cf. 6:14, which is why Job says that his friends are not faithful to him.

21.Hartley says, 'since there is no earthly party who will come to his defense, Job asserts that his *witness is in heaven*, he will testify to his innocence'.

22.Mende writes, 'Even now, i.e. even after his death, God remains for him a witness and guarantor of his innocence. For he, who is enthroned in heaven and therefore, unlike his friends, knows the true context of world events, which goes beyond the idea of retribution, must know that Job has perished unjustly in the judgment of this world. Thus Job pleads with God as his only helper (v. 20), that even after death he may still bring him justice "in the controversy with God" (v. 21). With the latter statement, Job is not expressing an irresolvable paradox of his faith, but rather in the context of the aforementioned post-exilic eschatology, a confession of trust in God, his redeemer: 'May he, at the end of time, when he lifts the judgment on the sinful creation, help him, whom he necessarily met as a judge as part of this creation during his lifetime, to do justice even if he suffers death before the end'.

23.Gladson explain that 'at this point, he returns to the motif introduced in chapter 9:33–35, the heavenly arbitrator (chap. 16,18–22). Earlier he used *mokiach*, "arbitrator," a term from the law courts. Here he utilizes two additional, parallel legal terms: *ed* (cf. Deut 17:6; 19:15) and *sahed*, both rendered simply as "witness" … Job has in mind arbitration similar to that of a human court, for verse 21 should probably be rendered: "So he will arbitrate in behalf of a man with God, like between a man with his neighbor"'.

24.Andersen says, 'Here we note two important features. God is the one who hears the cry of shed blood; and God is the one who is said to be *on high*. And Job has consistently appealed to God'.

25.ELB translates 'book', but EÜ translates 'inscription'. Hartley (1991:291) writes about this: Heb. *sēper* means 'book, scroll, tablet. It may also be used in a more general sense for any type of written record. In the light of v. 24 it is clear that Job thinks of a stone stela inscribed with his words'. Blommerde and Gehman attempt to show that the Phoenician *spr* can mean 'inscription' or 'monument'. Comparing the translations 'monument' and 'book', Hartley (1991:291) writes: 'But such a scroll could easily have been lost. Job has a more permanent monument in mind'.

would be carved into the rock with an iron pen and lead forever!

But I know: that my Redeemer (NJB; JPS TNK; ASV; RSV)[26] lives; and that he is the last to rise above the dust.

Without my skin, which is so torn, and without (RV; RSV; NIV)[27] my flesh, I will still see God.

Yes, I will see him for myself, and my own eyes will see him, but no longer as a stranger. My inner heart longs.

This section has two major parts: (1) Job's lament (vv. 23–24) and (2) Job's hope (vv. 25–27).

Job's lament (vv. 23–24)

Job first formulates his wish that his words, meaning his lament or his difficult situation, not be forgotten when he is dead (19:23–24; the two verses are synonymous parallelism) (Simundson 1986:95).[28] Job's unusual wish is that this difficult situation be written on his tombstone (Fohrer 1963:317; Galling 1954–1959:6).[29] Job therefore wishes that all people and generations will understand that his suffering or death is not unjust. This is therefore Job's lament over his severe suffering, which can lead him to death (19:26, '*without skin*' and '*without flesh*').

Job reflects on the limitations of human life, recognising that his existence is entirely within God's control. The phrase יָמָיו נִמְנוּ meaning 'his days are numbered', conveys the idea that the span of human life is fixed and unchangeable, predetermined by God's will. Job feels trapped by this divine decree, unable to extend or alter his life, as expressed in חֹק- לֹא יַעֲבוֹרוּ meaning 'a limit that cannot be exceeded'. This highlights Job's sense of helplessness, as he realises he cannot escape the fate set for him by God.

In verse 24, Job pleads with God, saying תָּשֵׁיב מִמֶּנּוּ -הֲלוֹא which Job is asking God to stop focusing on him and to cease the ongoing judgement and suffering. He desires relief from his constant agony and wishes to be allowed to rest, much like a hired worker who has completed their task. The phrase וְשָׂבַע בַּחֻרְפָּתוֹ meaning 'till he has had his fill of his contempt', reveals Job's wish for his suffering to come to an end after he has endured enough and for him to be granted peace as a worker is granted rest once their labour is ended.

Job's hope (vv. 25–27)

As in 13:14–16, 14:13–17 and 16:18–22, Job expresses his hope in God in 19:25–27, despite having fallen into severe suffering, that God is called 'redeemer'.[30] The Hebrew text says lag (Botterweck & Ringgren 1977:886).[31] In Bertholet's opinion, this word cannot be translated as redeemer, but rather: Kinsman, heir, one who has the duty to avenge a murdered person (~dh lag = avenger of blood) (Bertholet 1911:113).[32] According to Bertholet (1911), the translation should therefore read correctly:

> But I know that my avenger of blood is alive and will ultimately rise above the dust. The witness of my innocence will be with me, and I will see my acquitter for myself, I will see it with my own eyes and no stranger. (p. 113)

According to Bertholet (1911:113), lag here is a man or other than God (see Habel 1985:232–233; Irwin 1962:217–224; Mowinckel 1957:207–212). In this case, however, the parallel text 16:18–22 must be taken into account. By considering this parallel text, Hermisson (2004:677) writes, 'The parallel suggests that the witness there and the redeemer here refer to the same entity'. In 16:18–22, it is already clarified that the witness in v. 19 is no different from God himself (Fohrer 1963:318–323; Hartley 1991:292–295; Mitchell 1994:157–177; Seow 2004:709).[33] Although Job considers God to be his enemy here, he still has hope in God to justify his existence (Clines 2011:459; Hermisson 2004:679).[34] Hermisson (2004:679) rightly writes, 'In the larger context of Job's speeches, it is always God himself from whom Job expects a solution; nowhere is a mediator considered'. This is an eschatological hope in God in the final judgement.

The open question remains: What does Job mean by referring to God as his redeemer, the one who will ultimately rise above the dust? Does this indicate a belief in the resurrection of the dead in the Old Testament? While older commentators answer this question affirmatively, almost all of the younger commentators respond negatively, arguing that the word עפר does not refer to the grave or death, according to Budde (1913:104). The reference to the dust above which the redeemer rises does not signify Job's death or the death of all people but simply the earth (Fohrer 1963:318–321; Mende 1993:21). This can be understood by comparing it with Job 16:19, where the reference is to the witness in heaven, here it is to the גֹּאֵל on earth, or the earth is specifically mentioned as

26.NJB = 'Defender'; JPS TNK = 'Vindicator'; ASV, RSV and others = 'Redeemer'. But the translation for the word ylia]GOæ is much more problematic.

27.Kidner explains 'in itself, *min*, "from," can have various senses, including "away from" – hence the rendering "without my flesh" in the margins of RV, RSV; cf. NIV mg'. But Kidner still translates with the word 'from my flesh' and not 'without my flesh'. Against Kidner, I translate 'without my flesh'. On the one hand, this shows Job's difficult situation, that he is led through this situation in death, and on the other hand, although he would be dead, he still has hope that despite 'without flesh' he can see God.

28.Sidmunson says 'Job hopes that he will not be forgotten, that his words spoken in defense of his own integrity will not disappear when he dies. He wishes that his words could be written in a book … or inscribed on a rock so that they could be seen by future generations'.

29.Fohrer assumes that it is a written document: 'his lamentation and protestation of innocence, which are to be summarized for posterity in writing as a document on the basis of his oral statements in the present'.

30.These verses are considered the most disputed verses in the Book of Job.

31.'The verbum is used in two areas, on the one hand in legal and social life, and on the other with reference to God's redemptive action'. In connection with the use of the word lag in the Book of Job, this refers both to the profane legal and social sphere and to the religious sphere with reference to God's redemptive action.

32.Ringgren explains that 'if someone has been murdered, his death is to be avenged by the *gō'ēl haddām*, the avenger of blood, by killing the murderer or a member of his clan'.

33.Kaiser says 'in any case, whatever Job may have meant in the context of this speech, the overall structure of the book itself affirms that Job will, indeed, finally "see" God (42:5). As the book ends, too, one finds God eventually championing Job against his adversaries (his "friends"). Within the context of the book in its final form, God is Job's *gō'ēl* after all'.

34.Against Clines explains 'that his defense counsel will have the last word, that he will win his case'. And in agreement with Hermisson says 'Thus one must dispense with this interpretation of the witness and redeemer in the form of Job's claim to self-redemption'.

the place of appearance, because God appears. Hermisson (2004:682) rightly writes, however:

> This does not yet explain the use of עפר, and the comparison with Job 4:19, where 'heaven' (the heavenly servants of God v. 18) and 'earth' also contrast, is not at all conclusive, because the 'dust' there clearly stands for the frailty and transience of man.[35]

One must also contrast with 42:6: '*Therefore I recant and repent, because I am of dust and ashes*'. Both 4:19 and 42:6 belong to the theology of lowliness. Death demonstrates the frailty and transience of human beings:

> Death is generally accepted as the natural limit of created life. The death of old age is the blessed conclusion of a life close to God. 'He died old and full of life' [Job 42:17] is even said of Job, whose premature threat of death in his speeches with his friends was a harsh challenge. (Zimmerli 1949:16)

When one compares the frailty and transience of humanity with the majesty of God, one cannot claim that God is unjust. If Job suffered in affliction, that does not prove that God is unjust. When Job calls God his enemy, it is merely an assumption on his part, as he does not know for certain whether God is truly his enemy. After the affliction in Job 1 and 2, Satan is also involved in his suffering. '"God is in heaven – you are on earth" [Eccl. 5:1] – this sentence summarises his knowledge of man concisely' (Zimmerli 1949:21). God is majesty and has all power; man is transience, and death is his limit.

In all his bloody poverty, Job dares to expect the Redeemer in the Creator, who has already shown His love for the creature: 'I know that my answerer (Luther: Redeemer) lives'. This testimony shows that Job has understood the Old Testament faith in creation, which is believed based on salvation-historical experience. At the same time, however, it becomes clear from the Book of Job that, from a faith in creation that dares to believe in such an unbreakable 'yes' from the Creator, such a valid love relationship with the creature, the question must one day arise as to whether death, this 'no' to the creature, can really be God's last word to His beloved creature (Bias 2024; Zimmerli 1949:21–22).

But Job knows[36] exactly that God loves him as God's creature (see 14:15). This is Job's confession, 'Job believes he will somehow see God in vindication (v. 27)' (Gladson 1985:64). But Job not only believes in God as the 'Justifier' but also as the redeemer (Van Oorschot 1999:208).[37] When he dies, he also believes that God is his redeemer.

Job 19:23–27 is an addition to Job's reply (Chapter 19) to the second speech of Bildad (Chapter 18). In his speech, Eliphaz condemns Job as wicked, asserting that if Job suffers, he must have acted wickedly and is, therefore, one of the wicked. In his response, Job criticises God for treating him as an enemy. He acts against him in such a way that Job is pushed into the shadowy regions of life and the sphere of death, with God persecuting him in anger and destroying him without his justified complaint being heard (vv. 7–12). Not only does God wrong him, but his fellow human beings also wrong him (vv. 13–22). He complains that his friends and relatives have abandoned and accused him. In this unjust situation, Job wishes that he would not be forgotten after his death (19:23–24), and that this injustice might be inscribed on his tombstone. However, despite the injustice in his current situation, Job still hopes in God as his redeemer. Job knows that God is his creator and that he loves his creation, making him also the redeemer of his creature.

Conclusion: The motif of the additions

The conclusion of the article is that the Book of Job, particularly in passages like 19:23–27, contains apocalyptic theological motifs that reveal Job's eschatological hope for divine justice, vindication and the possibility of life after death. Despite experiencing profound suffering and feeling abandoned by both God and his friends, Job maintains his hope in God as his redeemer and creator. The article examines two key terms, 'redeemer' and 'witness', and shows how these terms point to Job's belief in ultimate vindication and deliverance, reflecting apocalyptic elements within Job's theology.

This research demonstrates that, despite the uncertainty and despair in Job's experience, he maintains a deep hope that God, as the righteous judge, will ultimately deliver justice and vindicate him in the end times. Through linguistic and theological analysis, the article reveals how apocalyptic motifs, such as resurrection and divine retribution, emerge in Job's speech, offering a new understanding of the portrayal of suffering, hope and restoration in the Book of Job.

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35.In the comparison with the sign of Jonah, the focus here is on the hope of resurrection.

36.ידע = generally means 'to recognize, to know'. In this verse, this word probably means 'to be known' or 'I confess'.

37.'Job's protest is occasionally combined with a final hope that God will once again show himself to be just and wise in the end. The statement about the divine redeemer in Job 19:25–27 belongs to these passages together with the word about the heavenly witness in Job 16:18–22'.

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